

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

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AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PBOR MO SS SP MR AG FR

SUBJECT: SAHARA ROUNDUP

1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: MUCH OF THE WEEKEND NEWS ON THE SAHARA CAME FROM PARIS, WHERE VISITING PRIMIN OSMAN GAVE A SERIES OF INTERVIEWS AND HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE. ON THE SAHARA, THE LAST SPANISH TROOPS LEFT JAN 12, WITH MOROCCANS AND MAURITANIANS OCCUPYING DAKHLA. MEANWHILE, ACRIMONY WITH ALGERIA CONTINUED UNABATED. END SUMMARY.

2. WHO GETS DAKHLA? FOLLOWING MOROCCAN ARMY'S JAN 8 OCCUPATION OF DAKHLA (VILLA CISNEROS), THE MEDIA REPORTED THAT THE LAST SPANISH SOLDIER HAD LEFT SAHARA JAN 12.
SEMI-OFFICIAL LE MATIN JAN 13 PRINTED REUTER STORY ON INNER
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PAGES REPORTING ARRIVAL OF 600 MAURITANIAN TROOPS IN DAKHLA,

THE FIRST ACKNOWLEDGEMENT HERE THAT TOWN WOULD BE JOINTLY OCCUPIED. MEANWHILE, MOROCCAN MEDIA CONTINUED TO DESCRIBE RECEPTION OF MOROCCANS BY DAKHLA INHABITANTS IN TERMS STRONGLY SUGGESTING MOROCCO INTENDED TO STAY. MOROCCAN GOVERNOR IN SAHARA, AHMED BENSOUDA, VISITED DAKHLA JAN 9 AND REPORTS DESCRIBED ACCLAIM OF INHABITANTS FOR "MOTHER COUNTRY" HE REPRESENTED. COMMUNIST AL BAYANE PUBLISHED EDITORIAL JAN 11 ENTITLED "MOROCCAN DAKHLA", UNDERLINING IMPORTANCE OXN "ACQUISITION" OF THIS VALUABLE REAL ESTATE. WESTERN JOURNALIST FRESH BACK FROM SAHARA JAN 8 TOLD EMBOFF THAT JEMAA PRESIDENT JOUMANI HAD TOLD HIM HE DID NOT WANT TO SEE SAHARA SPLIT UP. THIS WOULD SEEM TO REINFORCE QUOTE OF JOUMANI REPORTED PARA 4 OF MADRID 0144. IN JAN PRESS CONFERENCE, PRIMIN IN PARIS STUCK TO LINE THAT THERE NO PROBLEM BETWEEN MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA, SAYING THAT COOPERATION "TOTAL" AND MOROCCO HONORED ITS ENGAGEMENTS. WHO GETS DAKHLA, HOWEVER, REMAINED SOMEBODY'S SECRET.

3. OSMAN ON SAHARA, ALGERIA, LIBYA: SOME PERTINENT ITEMS
IN OSMAN'S LE MONDE INTERVIEW AND PARIS PRESS CONFERENCE:

--TRIPARTITE ACCORD MADE NO MENTION OF REFERENDUM "IN JURIDICIAL SENSE". QUESTION WAS ONE OF CONSULTATION OF POPULATION BY WAY OF JEMAA--THIS HAD BEEN "SCRUPULOUSLY APPLIED".
--WHEN KING SAID HE WOULD HAVE TEA IN EL AYOUN, IT WAS "WAY OF SPEAKING". OTHERS, INCLUDING PRIMIN, HAD DRUNK TEA FOR HIM. (COMMENT: A SOURCE WITH PALACE TIES HAS EXPRESSED OPINION TO EMBOFF THAT KING DID NOT GO TO EL AYOUN BECAUSE OF SECURITY CONCERNS.)
--TRIPARTITE PHASE MIGHT END BEFORE FEB 28.
--MOROCCO DOES NOT WANT WAR WITH ALGERIA BUT WOULD DEFEND ITSELF AND MOROCCANS ARE "NATION OF WARRIORS".
--THERE NO QUESTION OF MOROCCO UNDERTAKING REPRISALS AGAINST ALGERIANS LIVING IN MOROCCO.
--NOTHING TO SAY ABOUT ANY NEW PURCHASES OF FRENCH ARMS, BUT ARMS BEING BOUGHT "EVERWHERE BY EVERYONE".
--SPANISH-MOROCCAN RELATIONS EXCELLENT AND MIXED COMMITTEES WOULD BEGIN MEETING SOON TO DETERMINE "GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF COOPERATION BETWEEN TWO".
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--ON RECENT LIBYAN-ALGERIAN RAPPROCHEMENT, LIBYA HAD DECLARED ITSELF AGAINST BALKANIZATION AND IN FAVOR OF ARAB UNITY. MOROCCO CONSIDERS ITS RELATIONS WITH LIBYA "NORMALIZED". LIBYAN ABSTENTION IN UN VOTE ON SAHARA WAS "POSITIVE ELEMENT". RECENT ALGERIAN-LIBYAN MEETINGS "NOT DEFINITIVE" AND MOROCCO AWAITING EVENTS BEFORE JUDGING LIBYAN ATTITUDE. MOROCCO NOT MENACING ALGERIAN "OR ANY OTHER REVOLUTION".

--THERE SOME CONFUSION ON WHEREABOUTS OF YOUNG FRENCH CITIZENS MISSING SINCE CHRISTMAS. INVESTIGATION CONTINUES. (COMMENT: GROUP OF FIVE FRENCH YOUTHS AND A MOROCCAN FRIEND, INCLUDING TWO CHILDREN OF FRENCH POLITICAL COUNSELOR, HAVE BEEN MISSING IN SOUTH OF MOROCCO AND SPECULATION HAS BEEN RIFE THAT THEY MAY HAVE FALLEN INTO HANDS OF THE F POLISARIO. END COMMENT.)

4. ANTI-ALGERIAN CAMPAIGN: GOM MEDIA CONTINUED TO SURFACE STATEMENTS BY ALGERIAN POLITICAL EXILES LIVING HERE. FORMER ALGERIAN MINISTER, KAID AHMED, ISSUED STATEMENT PROMINENTLY CARRIED IN SEMI-OFFICIAL PRESS JAN 11 WHICH SHARPLY CRITICIZED ALGERIAN LEADERS FOR POLICY OF "DEMONIAC FOLLY" IN SAHARA. HE WROTE NEITHER ALGERIAN PEOPLE NOR ARMY READY TO DIE FOR "STRATEGIC POLITICS" AND "KNIGHTS OF HIGH FINANCE (WHO) ATTRACTED TO PHOSPHATES". ISTIQLAL L'OPINION PUBLISHED LETTER JAN 10 FROM KARIM ALI, NEPHEW OF KARIM BELKACEM, CALLING ON ALGERIANS LIVING IN MOROCCO TO ASSIST MOROCCANS RECENTLY EXPelled FROM ALGERIA.

5. ALGERIAN EMBOFF TOLD EMBOFF JAN 11 THAT SUCH STATEMENTS WOULD HAVE LITTLE EFFECT IN ALGERIA, WHERE POPULATION HAD LONG FORGOTTEN MOST OF THESE PEOPLE. ACKNOWLEDGED HOWEVER THAT BOUDIAF (RABAT 0151) HAD BEEN VERY IMPORTANT FIGURE AND SUGGESTED THAT GOM MAY HAVE PUT PRESSURE ON HIM TO SPEAK OUT.

6. JAN 10 L'OPINION PUBLISHED TEXT OF INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD MOHA, LEADER OF SPORADICALLY ACTIVE PRO-REGIME SAHARA LIBERATION GROUPING, IN WHICH HE CHARGED THAT POLISARIO ONLY SERVING AS FRONT FOR ACTIVITIES OF ALGERIAN ARMY REGULARS. ELSEWHERE, HE CHARGED THAT ALGERIAN MILITARY AND SUBVERSION CAMPAIGNS AGAINST MOROCCO BEING DIRECTED BY CAPT JELLOUL MALAIKA, WHO ALLEGEDLY RECEIVES HIS INSTRUCTIONS FROM ALGERIAN MFA VIA DEI (ALGERIAN INTELLIGENCE). LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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